

The key recommendations of the Conference were announced, as well as the challenges we face in the process of European integration related to the area of competition policy in Montenegro, Serbia and North Macedonia, as follows:

1. **It was jointly stated that it is EFFECTIVE PROTECTION OF COMPETITION ONE OF THE KEY MEASURES OF PROGRESS IN ECONOMIC REFORMS – that is the determinant of the QUALITY of the overall economic environment which is established in the country, which includes the quality of the implemented REGULATORY REFORMS - by which it is assessed whether a modern economic system (e.g. candidate country) represents a FUNCTIONAL MARKET ECONOMY, which is the first economic criterion for joining the European Union.** Rules that are relating to the protection of competition represent the basis on which it was formed market economy of one country. In the process of joining the European Union **competition policy** occupies one of the most important places because of its effective implementation contributes to the improvement of the economy, development and growth of the number companies, improving investment in research and development of new products, attracting new investment and increasing production and export.
2. **Candidate countries ARE OBLIGATORY TO ACCEPT AND FULLY IMPLEMENT UNION COMPETITION POLICY – before achieving full rights membership.** As one of the most important common policies of the Union, this policy includes protection of competition and state aid, ie it implies rules and procedures for combating violations of the rules of conduct of participants on market (restrictive agreements between companies, abuse dominant position and monitoring the concentration of market participants), as well as allocation of prohibited/illicit state aid which results in placing certain participants in a more favorable position.
3. **In the coming period, the greatest attention will be paid to STRENGTHENING OF ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITIES OF COMPETENT INSTITUTIONS FOR COMPETITION POLICY AND CONTROL OF STATE AID,** in order to ensure appropriate balance of achieved results and fully enable equal and fair conditions to all participants in national markets. The strengthening process administrative capacity includes both **additional employment and permanent employee training.** This is one of the key criteria assessments of progress in this area, making these agencies operational and functionally independent, and their position in the decision-making process in this area is stronger, as is the awareness of their importance and competencies.
4. In addition to the competent institutions, it is necessary to **STRENGTHEN THE CAPACITY AND DEPARTMENTAL MINISTRIES, COMPETENT COURTS AND STATE PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE.** It is especially necessary to continuously and consistently strengthen the professional capacity of courts in the area of cartels, concentration, abuse dominant position, and state aid.

5. Adequate administrative capacity will enable the competent authorities i.e. institutions achieve a **GREATER DEGREE OF TRANSPARENCY IN THEIR WORK, which includes ESTABLISHMENT OF ALL REGISTERS, AVAILABILITY OF ALL NECESSARY PUBLIC DATA, AS WELL AS A STRONG INFORMATION SUPPORT IN DAILY WORK.** We are witnessing the current crisis caused by the pandemic further emphasized the importance of strengthening electronic services and creating bases, in order to raise the efficiency of policy implementation and provision public services to the economy and citizens.
6. The quality of negotiations in this area will be more efficient if provided **GOOD INTEGRATION OF THE TOTAL NEGOTIATION STRUCTURE**, i.e. continuity of the organizational form of the competent institutions involved in the negotiations, especially the competent agencies, thus preserving the overall **INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY OF THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS** and strengthen professional knowledge and negotiation skills. In other words, the countries of the region are fully aware and accept that EU competition policy must be **GRADUALLY ADOPTED**, but about its implementation in the pre-accession process should be negotiated on the basis of **objective criteria and conditions of implementation** in which economies they function, especially in **conditions of economic crises** such as pandemics COVID -19.
7. **With the quality of the presentations of the respected panelists, as well as the discussions, we achieved main goal of our Conference** and that is: **PRESENT SCOPE** Negotiating Chapter 8 - Competition Policy and its significance for EU single market, **AS WELL AS THE STATUS OF ACCESSION NEGOTIATIONS**, ie preparation of selected countries of the Region - Montenegro, the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of North Macedonia for policy negotiations competition.
8. At the same time, we have contributed to the achievement of **our overall goal project, which is STRENGTHENING DIALOGUE between the government, academia, non-governmental organizations, and companies** in connection with the joint European policies, support for the exchange of experiences between candidate countries, raising knowledge of state aid/policy rules competition, especially state aid rules, as well as their impact on quality and scope of the negotiation process, understanding of the process itself integration into the EU and its impact on the economies of our countries.